

SUPPLEMENT.

The Mining Journal, RAILWAY AND COMMERCIAL GAZETTE

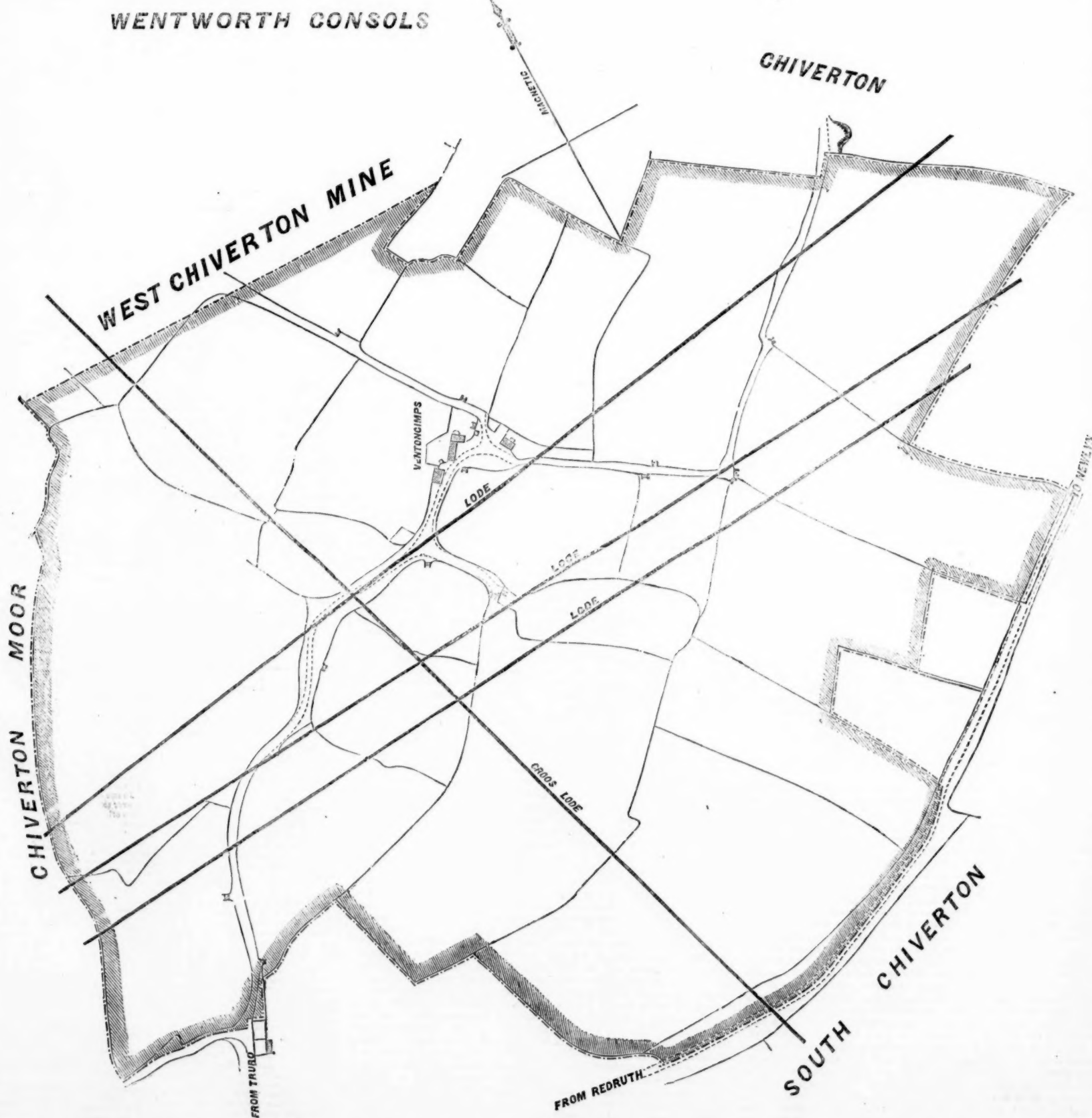
FORMING A COMPLETE RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF ALL PUBLIC COMPANIES.

No. 1495.—Vol. XXXIV.]

LONDON, SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1864.

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PLAN OF THE GREAT SOUTH CHIVERTON MINING DISTRICT.



The sett delineated in the above plan is situated in the parish of Perannabuloe, in Cornwall, and is upwards of 600 fms. in length, by 400 fms. wide. The district has proved to be one of the richest in lead in Corn-

wall, and the recent improvements in West Chiverton Mine, adjoining, caused the market value of its shares to increase nearly tenfold in a single year. The prospectus of the Great South Chiverton Silver-Lead Mining

Company, as well as a report of a meeting of adventurers therein, will be found in another column of this day's Journal, from which it will be seen that the property is one of the most attractive in the district.

THE VENTILATION OF MINES.*

ON THE APPLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF AIR CURRENTS.

Having mentioned some of the inconveniences from foul air and noxious gases which miners have to contend with in all underground operations, and to get rid of, either by sweeping them out of the workings, or to destroy their vitiating power by throwing in an excess of pure air, there remains now to be considered under this subject of ventilating mines, the most important point; how is this current of air to be produced and applied? and in undertaking this branch of our subject it will be well to treat it under two heads.—1. The production of the current.—2. The distribution of the air through the mine.

A great mistake is commonly made by those who think that in the conception of some good machine for supplying a powerful current of air, the whole difficulty of ventilating mines is overcome. Nothing is more erroneous than this, for there may be a perfect hurricane blowing through a mine, and yet the workings badly ventilated, through an imperfect application of the current of air. We can but consider it a most fortunate circumstance that Nature produces currents in many instances, and that she only requires to be aided to perform effectually the requirements of the miner; but although this may be often true, there are many cases where artificial currents are needed. These latter instances we will speak of afterwards. But, first, less us speak of those cases where we may trust to natural ventilation. Now, the simplest of all mining operations are those confined to an adit level; and if we examine what takes place in one of these simple workings we shall find that as we recede from the mouth of the level, the air becomes warmed by many causes, such as the respiration of the men, the combustion of the candles, &c.; this heated air becoming rarified, rises to the top of the level, and gradually forces its way out to the mouth of the adit, and as it flows out at the top it is replaced by cold air flowing in along the bottom. By applying the principle on which the current is here produced, a level may be carried a great distance. The air, however, is exposed to great friction, and unless the level be large and smooth we cannot expect to carry the current any great distance from the entrance. The same natural current which is set up in the case of the level, will be also set up in a shaft; in this case, however, the current will steal down the sides of the shaft, and pass up its centre.

Now, where there are two orifices to a mine, let us look into the kind of action, with reference to what takes place with regard to the air currents.

Let the two shafts, communicate beneath by a level, and suppose the ground at the surface slopes, so as to make one shaft deeper than the other; in the winter time we shall find under such circumstances, that the column of air is much colder in the shorter than in the longer shaft, and that the rarified air in the longer shaft will be pressed out by the greater weight of the air in the shorter shaft; thus a current of air will be induced, which will flow down the shorter and out of the longer shaft. Such, however, will not be the case all the year round, for in the summer time we shall find that the temperature of the atmosphere being higher than that of the workings, the current will be reversed to what it was in the winter. And at the time of the equinoxes, when the temperature of the air will be pretty much that of the mine, the air will become stagnant; and thus trusting to this sort of ventilation alone, becomes very dangerous. This stagnation is not an uncommon occurrence in some of the wretchedly managed collieries of the South of Staffordshire, where, trusting entirely to such ventilation, from the fighting of the air, as they call it, at certain seasons, the men are unable to work in the mine. Above all, to trust to this unaided and natural ventilation is peculiarly dangerous where there is fire-damp in the workings. Instances of this may be seen in some of the collieries of North Wales, where there are two pits, and the supply of air is dependent on the currents produced by Nature. Now, some parts of these collieries are fiery, others not so, and it is the custom to lead the air through the purer parts of the colliery first, and from thence to those parts from which the gas emanates, the men working near the downcast with naked lights, and near the upcast with safety-lamps. The air enters pure, but as it passes through the mine becomes fouled and explosive. Now, if from external causes the natural current should become reversed, as is quite possible in the height of summer, the foul air would flow back on the naked lights, and, probably, suffocate the men, or lead to a terrific explosion.

In undertaking the ventilation of a mine it should be remembered that the air after entering becomes rarified in the heated workings, and that it increases in bulk in consequence of this, as well as from the addition of the gases it picks up in its course through the workings, so that when it makes its exit its volume is greatly augmented. In collieries the entering current of fresh air is called the "intake," the outgoing the "return," and the shaft through which the fresh air enters is called the "downcast," that through which the foul air escapes the "upcast." Now, there has been a great deal of discussion amongst practical colliers from time to time as to which shaft ought to be of the larger diameter, the upcast or the downcast, and most various are the opinions on the subject. To settle this much-vexed question, some experiments were made in stacks of different forms, some smaller at the base than at the top, others larger, and others of equal diameter throughout their length, and it was then found that the best results were obtained—i.e., the most powerful current was produced—in those stacks that were cylindrical. In Lincolnshire they commonly held that the upcast shaft ought to be smaller than the downcast, a notion that can only have arisen from observing the greater force of the current escaping where the upcast is the smaller of the two. In fact, when we consider that we have an expanded quantity of air to get rid of through the upcast, it stands to reason that that shaft ought to be the larger.

Let us see now what artificial aids can be brought to bear in assisting natural ventilation. In most metalliferous mines there is a sufficient current of air through the upper workings, and it is only at considerable depths that it is necessary to aid the natural currents to produce perfect ventilation. The natural current may be caused by one shaft being longer than the other from undulations of the ground at the surface, or from there being an adit communicating with one shaft. Now, where there is no such determining cause for a current, we may induce it by building over the mouth of one shaft a stack of stone, which has simply the effect of destroying the equilibrium of the air in the two shafts. This plan has been objected to on the ground that it renders the shaft over which the chimney is built useless for other purposes. The plan has been, however, most successful in many collieries, and where the shaft has been required for winding a simple modification has been adopted, which is to place the stack on the one side of the main shaft, and to make a communication between its base and the main shaft below the surface. The air is then made to pass along this channel, and thence up the chimney by a trap-door placed on the main shaft, which door is only open whilst winding or drawing is being carried on.

Another plan, formerly more common than now in the case of small mines, was that of putting over the shaft's mouth a "horse's head," or cowl, similar to those placed on the tops of chimneys. This cowl is supplied with a vane, which has the effect of bringing its orifice in such a direction that the wind blows into it, and so passes down into the workings. Sometimes the opposite shaft is fitted with another cowl, the vane of which is so arranged that the mouth of the orifice points away from the wind. This mode is one by which ventilation may often be assisted, and is one to be seen in many of the mines in the limestone of Flintshire. This brings us to the subject of air-pipes, which have been employed largely in some mines; as it also brings us to the subject of obtaining two channels for the air. Under this last head, it may be stated that when we find it a difficult matter to get two shafts in a mine we may divide the single one into two for ventilating purposes by brattices, and make one-half the upcast and the other half the downcast. Another device for the same purpose is to construct a small shaft by the side of the main one, and to divide it from the main one by a brick wall; this, however, is merely a modification of the plan of dividing the shaft itself by brickwork; and, like the preceding, is much inferior to the plan of having two shafts wherever it is possible.

In underground operations it is sometimes required to ventilate a long level, and to do this a common method, where the level is tolerably high, and its lower part convex, is to place over the hollow bottom a row of planks, and on these planks a covering of turf. By this means a good temporary air-way may be formed, but where a permanent road is required the planks should be replaced by an arch of brick. Another plan in stratified ground is to cut out a trumpeting, or nich, at the side of the level, throughout its length, and to plank it up. Again, a more common method is that of placing along the level air-pipes or boxes. If the level is large, such air-boxes are usually made of thin plank, and fit into one another, the joints being rendered air-tight by well-tempered mud. The boxes are then cramped to the side of the level. Lead pipes have been attempted instead of wooden boxes, but are found to be very expensive. Zinc pipes are considered good for this purpose, and even papier mache

*Notes from a Lecture by Prof. W. W. SMITH, at the Royal School of Mines.

has been tried, but is found utterly useless, except where the level is quite dry. The best of all air-pipes are those made of cast-iron, and it is a pity they are not more employed for the purpose. All these contrivances, however, ought to be looked on as temporary, and subsidiary to the usual methods of our collieries, where we have two distinct and separate roads or passages for the air.

The nature of the ventilating apparatus will, of course, vary with the nature of the deposit in which the workings are situated. In working a thick seam of coal, such as the Dudley seam, the air-drift is commonly made at the side of the workings, and a great portion of the thickness of the coal lies above the level of the drift, so that when the coal is all worked away the foul air rises to the top and there remains. It was, therefore, proposed, and thought a wonderful idea, to carry the air-road above the main headings, and by this it was thought all explosions from the collection of foul air would be avoided. The discovery, if it may be called so, would, however, only apply to thick seams. The great mistake is, not so much in placing the air-road in any particular position, but rather in making it so absurdly small. In some of our coal mines the air-roads are carried through the adjoining shales; and, being imperfectly looked after, often become choked from the falling of the shale. This danger is so thoroughly recognised in the better managed collieries in the North of England that men are there especially appointed to keep the air-ways in good working order.

Natural ventilation may be most successfully employed in metalliferous mines where the shafts and levels are all of good size. The Great Laxey Mine is ventilated by no other means than what may be termed spontaneous ventilation, and there the temperature at the bottom of the mine is no higher than at the surface. We might cite other remarkable instances of perfect ventilation, by simply assisting the natural tendency of the air currents in a mine, and one especially may be mentioned—the long adit 220 fathoms under surface, and 3200 metres long, driven to unwater the mines of Schemnitz; throughout its whole length there was no shaft communicating with the surface, and no ventilation but by natural currents properly applied. We may mention, as an instance of the successful application of natural currents to colliery ventilation, the Tyne Colliery, where the shaft was 672 feet deep. The temperature at the surface was 43° Fahr., at the bottom of the downcast shaft 46° Fahr., at the bottom of the upcast 63° Fahr., and the amount of air passed through the colliery per minute was 36,564 ft. The simplest mode of carrying out a ventilating current by this principle is that of increasing the temperature in one shaft. The oldest device of this sort was that of lowering a fire into the upcast shaft whenever the direction of the current of air became uncertain. The next improvement on this rule mode was that of forming a regular furnace, of which there were two sorts. The first, where the furnace was placed at the mouth of the shaft, and the escaping air was brought over the fire, which, of course, did not in any way affect the column of air in the shaft itself, and was, consequently, valueless; the second was that of burning a small fire at the bottom of the upcast shaft. All these, however, have been abolished for regular furnaces built in the shafts. Such furnaces should be separated from the inflammable coal by well-built brick arches, placed one over the other. The dimensions of these furnaces are very various, some are 4 ft., others 5, 6, and 7 ft. wide; they are always put at the bottom of the upcast shaft, their object being to raise the temperature of the column of air in that shaft. The question now arises, ought the air to be passed under, through, or above the fire? On this point there are a variety of opinions; in all cases, however, where the air is fouled, from the presence of carburetted hydrogen, it should not be allowed to come near the fire, but should be carried over it in a dumb drift, completely isolated from the furnace heated air, from which should join the shaft some distance above. The furnace should be fed by a current of fresh air brought especially into the mine for the purpose. Such an arrangement prevents all chance of an explosion. In ventilating by furnaces, the temperature of the upcast is often raised from 140° to 150° Fahr., which gives so great an excess in favour of the upcast that the current of air is abundant. A modification, and a great improvement on the ordinary form of ventilating furnace, has been lately put up at the Hetton Colliery. This new furnace is very large, being 26 ft. in length, and has this great advantage, amongst others, that the bars can be easily cleaned by raking the fire from one part of the furnace to the other, an operation which in the usual furnace it is not easy to perform without putting out the fire.

PLAIN PAPERS ON GEOLOGY—No. I.

BY THOMAS STRUTHERS.

STRATIFIED ROCKS.—There is abundant evidence to prove that the stratified, or aqueous rocks, were originally deposited in water as layers of sediment, and afterwards more or less compacted by the pressure of superincumbent materials, by heat, by chemical processes, or otherwise, and elevated to their present position by volcanic agency, forming our sandstones, slates, &c., the limestones having, for the most part, been secreted from the waters by a sort of animal chemistry. These water-formed rocks are classified in accordance with their age, organic contents, and mineral composition. The oldest, or first in order, are denominated primary, those that succeed are termed secondary, and they are followed by the tertiary and post-tertiary. To indicate peculiarities connected with their fossil contents, the primary rocks are distinguished as Palæozoic—i.e., containing antique life; the secondary, as Mesozoic, middle life; the tertiary, as Cainozoic, recent life; and to the post-tertiary we may apply the term Anthropozoic, human life. To indicate the prevailing forms of life during successive stages of the earth's history, we may embrace these rocks in four ages—The age of fishes, the age of reptiles, the age of mammals, and the age of man. With reference to their composition, the stratified rocks are usually classed as argillaceous (clayey), siliceous (flinty), calcareous (limy), and carbonaceous (coaly); but it must be understood that not unfrequently two or more of these properties may be combined in the same rock—thus, for example, we have calcareous sandstone, carbonaceous shale, and so on. Taken in detail, the stratified rocks are arranged into systems, which are again divided into groups, sub-groups, &c. The terms employed to designate the different systems are, like the alphabet of our language, a piece of patchwork, some bearing reference to the colour or composition of particular rocks, others to localities in which they are typically developed, or to their relative order of superposition. In geological nomenclature we recognise also a number of German miners' terms, introduced by Werner, and not a few English provincial terms, adopted by William Smith, the founder of the geological doctrine of the "succession of life in time," while, indeed, almost every mining district has contributed some technical term to the omnium gathering of the geological vocabulary. To apprehend correctly what is meant by the terms "system" and "group," let us go back in imagination to any particular geological epoch, and conceive the earth's surface as consisting of a series of watery hollows and land areas, differently distributed from those of the present day; the former containing their peculiar types of aquatic life, and strewn with representatives of the terrestrial plants and animals of the period, swept by rivers into these aqueous reservoirs along with the earthy detritus, of which the stratified rocks mainly consist. Volcanic agency, ever more or less active, may produce partial oscillations, in some cases raising, and in others depressing these basins of deposit, and it may be, here and there scattering from sub-aerial insular volcanic craters, showers of dust and ashes, or discharging from their submerged flanks streams of molten lava, that become interstratified with the materials more gradually accumulated by aqueous agency. The various instruments of change, operating in some cases gradually, and in others suddenly, after the lapse of ages, produce a decided alteration in the relative distribution of sea and land, and, consequently, of climate. New races of plants and animals gradually take the place of those that had died out under the influence of adverse circumstances. A volume of the geologic history of the earth has been completed, the various layers of rock matter are its leaves, and the organic remains they contain its pictorial illustrations and chronological data. Fragmentary, no doubt, are these wrecks of the past life of the globe, and inexplicable they may appear to the unskilled observer. It is the task of the geologist to disentangle the rock-entombed remnants of former denizens of the earth, the air, and the water, to link together their scattered bones, to re-inspire their shrunken forms with the breath of life, to revive the blighted foliage of many a graceful shrub and noble tree, and assign to each and all their places in a picture of the epoch of which they constituted a distinctive feature.

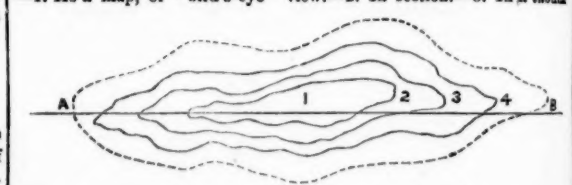
Such a picture would represent the restored aspect of what has been called a geological "formation" or "system," which is made up of subordinate groups of strata, bearing some analogy to each other in their organic remains, and it may be in lithological features, but not exactly identical in either; for even in the now apparently stable condition of the earth's surface, judging from our experience of the present, we are led to the conclusion that partial changes are taking place, and producing modifications

of the order of things, which, however, will be superseded only after the lapse of a protracted period, at least so long as the present laws of Nature continue in force. Thus, the lower and upper beds of a system may present a difference of lithological aspect, and contain some organic remains of a dissimilar character; but both will exhibit certain physical features, and be distinguished by containing certain species in common, which will stamp them as equally the products of one geological era, during which the same general conditions exerted a controlling influence. Considerable areas of the submerged basins of a particular period will be elevated, and form dry land in succeeding eras, while other portions may continue under water. The latter are overlaid by the deposits of a newer formation, while the former remain as the surface rocks; so that in one district of a country we may find at the surface rocks of Silurian age, and in another Old Red Sandstone; or, it may be, strata embraced in the Carboniferous system; and such a statement will account for the fact that the whole series of stratified rocks is not found complete in one locality. To have a correct understanding of the position and mode of occurrence of the stratified rocks we must fix in our minds the idea of an original hollow or water bed of greater or less extent, gradually filled up with a series of deposits, argillaceous, siliceous, calcareous, and, it may be, carbonaceous, as well as of a mixed character, derived partly from the land by the transporting power of rivers, and partly from the water by the secreting power of living creatures, such as molluscs, foraminifera, and coral-forming zoophytes. The oldest, or first formed of these deposits, would, as a matter of course, occupy the bottom of the basin, while the newer overlie them. The upheaving power of volcanic action, in many cases accompanied by the eruption of masses of rock matter, exerted over portions of this basin will have the effect not only of elevating these portions above the waters, but of giving them a form according to the outline of the area affected, as well as to the extent and method of the force, while agencies taking effect subsequent to their upheaval, particularly such an agency as denudation—that is, the destructive power of water or ice—will also be found to have contributed in no ordinary degree to the peculiar arrangement of the stratified rocks of the earth's crust.

By the operation of such causes it is not unusual to find the strata, particularly of the Carboniferous system, arranged in a basin-like form, the highest beds being the most circumscribed in their superficial range, and occupying a central position, the lower forming successive zones round them, and all dipping or sloping towards the centre of the basin, at a greater or less angle, according to its configuration. This will not be found invariably the case, but it is well to set out with this idea. A careful examination of the strata will, in most cases, present many phenomena, resulting from peculiarities connected with the deposition of the materials of which they consist, such as the wider distribution of the finer grained sediment, composed of sand or clay, and the more local character of the coarser grits, conglomerates, and breccias, as also the thinning out of particular beds, and the varying mineral composition of others; while not less striking will be the evidence of volcanic action during, and subsequent to, the formation of the strata, as indicated by the presence of igneous rocks of various ages, either in the form of dykes or flats, as well as by numerous dislocations, too well known to the practical miner, the originally horizontal or inclined strata being, in many instances, so much disturbed as to be thrown into a vertical position, or so crushed and contorted as to render a detailed geological examination of particular districts a work of considerable difficulty and uncertainty.

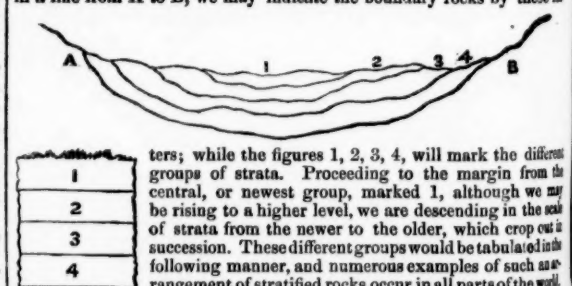
The denuding agency of ice during the Newer Pliocene glacial period will be found to have exerted a powerful modifying effect; here levelling the surface, or scooping out deep valleys or lake beds, and there piling up immense heaps of clay, sand, and gravel, intermingled with fragments of rock: nor can we overlook the evidence of denudation by which portions of the sea-bottom elevated during the period had been affected. So powerful, indeed, have these disturbing forces been, that in many instances there is good reason to believe the original boundary of the basin of deposit, even when not submerged in our present seas, has been completely changed; while occasionally a few fragmentary patches are all that remain to attest the former existence of whole systems of strata now swept away.

Such a basin of deposit as described may be represented in three ways.—1. As a map, or "bird's-eye" view.—2. In section.—3. In a tabular



form. For example, let us suppose that within this dotted line the basin-like arrangement of strata referred to is recognised. We would look for the upper, or newer beds, in the centre, as represented by the figure 1; while the lower beds would crop out, or reach the surface in succession, till the extreme limit of the basin were reached. The marginal beds, 4, might either rest upon igneous or stratified rocks, or to be overlaid by the former, according to circumstances.

To exhibit a sectional view of the various strata contained in this basin in a line from A to B, we may indicate the boundary rocks by these letters:



ters; while the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, will mark the different groups of strata. Proceeding to the margin from the central, or newest group, marked 1, although we may be rising to a higher level, we are descending in the scale of strata from the newer to the older, which crop out in succession. These different groups would be tabulated in the following manner, and numerous examples of such an arrangement of stratified rocks occur in all parts of the world.

MANCHESTER ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF STEAM-BOILER EXPLOSIONS.—At the ordinary monthly meeting of this association, on Tuesday (Mr. W. Fairbairn, C.E., in the chair), the report of the chief engineer, Mr. L. E. Fletcher, stated that during the past month 311 engines have been examined, and 418 boilers; 20 of the latter being examined specially, and 4 of them tested with hydraulic pressure. Of the 418 boiler examinations, 333 have been external, 11 internal, and 74 thorough. In the boilers examined, 255 defects have been discovered, 4 of them being dangerous. In one of the defects the boiler was an elephant, and one of the lower tubes gave way over the fire, the plate bulging downwards into a cup shape, and the metal, which was originally three-eighths of an inch thick, being wasted away to three-sixteenths. The feed-water was very sedimentary, and in this construction of boiler, as, indeed, in all those fired underneath, the sediment is apt to lodge in the most dangerous part—immediately over the fire. Instances of the danger attending the plan of external firing are constantly occurring. It may be added that the plates of the lower cylinders in these elephant boilers frequently become burnt away, in consequence of the steam being confined in the lower chamber, through imperfect circulation of the water. Also these boilers are extravagant in their consumption of fuel, and very dependent on the integrity of their brickwork setting, which is found to be a frequent source of trouble and expense; while the arrangement of fittings, such as water-gauges, &c., is complicated and inconvenient. Amongst the cases of deficiency of water was one which was due to the watchman's keeping up the fires within the boiler without noticing that the water was out of sight in the gauge glass. It appears that the boiler lost its water through leakage at the back pressure valve. Owing, however, to the inlet being nearly as high as the furnace crowns, the damage done to them was but trifling. Where the feed is introduced a little above the level of the furnace-crowns, they cannot be laid bare by the water either being drained or syphoned out. Another case arose from the failure of the watchman to close the tap, so that the furnace-crowns were laid bare and became overheated. In consequence, however, of the boiler being fitted with a low-water safety-valve, which let off the pressure of the steam on the water's falling below the proper level, the injury to the furnace-crowns was very trifling. Had blowing-out from the surface of the water been adopted instead of from the bottom, the furnace-crowns could not have been laid bare. These two cases of injury afforded an illustration of the advantage of the plan recommended by the Association of introducing the feed, as well as blowing-out, at the surface of the water, and it is thought that it would be well were this arrangement generally adopted.

For the present month Mr. Fletcher has to report three explosions, from which 15 lives have been lost, and also 25 persons injured. Not one of the boilers was under the charge of this association. The scene of the explosion has been personally visited in each case, and the cause investigated. The boiler which exploded in one of the instances was of the vertical furnace class, and heated by the flames passing off from three iron furnaces. These flames played in the first instance on the outside of the boiler, then passed through three neck openings into a central internal descending flue, and thence by means of a culvert to the chimney. Mr. Fletcher observes that this is a dangerous class of boiler, which is very inconvenient for complete examination, and the plates at the bottom, upon which it sits, may be seriously corroded without detection, unless the boiler is lifted from its seat. Also the intense flames from the reverberatory furnaces impinge directly

